



Hospital Wing and Pedi-Flite lose members in helicopter crash

10/22/13, 1 p.m.

A Hospital Wing helicopter with a Le Bonheur Pedi-Flite crew onboard crashed this morning in Fayette County. The team was en route to Bolivar, Tenn., to pick up a patient for transport to Le Bonheur Children's Hospital.

Hospital Wing pilot Charles Smith, Pedi-Flite Nurse Carrie Barlow and Pedi-Flite Respiratory Therapist Denise Adams died in the crash. Pedi-Flite is the pediatric and neonatal critical care transport team of Le Bonheur Children's Hospital.

"We are deeply saddened by the loss of our Le Bonheur family members," said Le Bonheur CEO Meri Armour. "Lots of people count on us to go out and rescue children wherever they are. Pedi-Flite is like the cavalry, going out into the community and surrounding areas. Our families often tell me that once the Pedi-Flite team shows up, they know they're going to be taken care of."

Bill Conway, CEO of Hospital Wing, said, "You can't do this kind of work without loving what you do. These people accomplish very tough things day in and day out, and they make it look easy."

A transport team from Bolivar transported the patient by ambulance to Le Bonheur.

An investigation by state and federal agencies is underway.

Hospital Wing is a non-profit air medical transport partnership with local hospitals.

Le Bonheur offers the only pediatric transport service in a 130-mile radius, and we transport more than 2,500 critically ill or injured children each year – 400 of them by helicopter, according to Jay Pershad, medical director of Pedi-Flite.

About the members of the team:

Carrie Barlow, a 43-year-old nurse on Le Bonheur Children's Hospital's Pedi-Flite team, began her career at Le Bonheur in January of 2012. She worked as a nurse in West Tennessee for 13 years. Prior to joining the Le Bonheur team, she served as a neonatal intensive care nurse for Lauderdale Community Hospital in Ripley, Tenn., and Jackson-Madison County General in Jackson, Tenn. Carrie lived in Halls, Tenn., with her husband, Keith, and is the mother to three children.

Denise Adams, a 43-year-old respiratory therapist on Le Bonheur Children's Hospital's Pedi-Flite team, joined Le Bonheur as a respiratory therapist in August of 2003. She joined the Pedi-Flite team in July 2005 and has served the team as a respiratory therapist for the past eight years. Denise lived in Arlington, Tenn., with her husband, Rodney, and is the mother to three children.

Charles Smith, a 47-year-old pilot, began his career at Hospital Wing in 2012. He retired from the aviation unit of the Memphis Police Department in 2012, after 25 years of service. Charles and his wife, Chi, lived in Eads, Tennessee, with their two sons.